



The Mosaic String Quartet

Watershed Theatre
Customs Street West, Auckland

Programmes

Friday 10th March 1995, 8pm

Anthony Watson: String Quartet No.1
Nigel Keay: String Quartet No.2 (Premiere performance)
(Interval)
Beethoven Op.18 No.4

Saturday 11th March 1995, 8pm

Anthony Watson: String Quartet No.1
Helen Bowater: "The Bodhi Tree" (Premiere performance)
(Interval)
Ivan Zagni: "View from my Window"
Jack East: The Lullaby
Nigel Keay: String Quartet No.2

Sunday 12th March 1995, 2.30pm

Beethoven: Op.18 No.4
Helen Bowater: "The Bodhi Tree"
(Interval)
Ivan Zagni: "View from my Window"
Jack East: The Lullaby
Nigel Keay: String Quartet No.2

Programme notes

Beethoven: String Quartet Op.18 No.4 in C Minor

Allegro ma non tanto
Scherzo (Andante scherzoso quasi allegretto)
Minuetto & Trio (Allegro - più allegro)
Allegro - Prestissimo

Beethoven (1770-1827) wrote a total of sixteen Quartets spanning his entire life and the quartet was his favoured medium for his last works. Written very early in his career, Op.18 No.4 is actually the first quartet Beethoven wrote. At that time quartets were usually published in groups of six, so No.4 refers to the placement in the published set of six which comprise opus 18.

Anthony Watson: String Quartet No.1 (1959)

Allegro
Adagio - Vivace - Adagio non troppo - Prestissimo

Anthony Watson was a New Zealand born composer (1933-1973) whose whole life was spent in this country. He left a legacy of powerful music, notably three string quartets and several works for strings. After graduating with a Diploma in Music from the University of Otago he became a professional violist with the National Orchestra (1958-69) after which he became the first Mozart Fellow at the University of Otago in 1970, extended to 1971. Although he did not favour performing his own music even though he would have been well equipped to do so, Watson gained much inspiration through the playing of the standard string quartet repertoire. The first movement of Watson's Quartet No.1 is reminiscent of Beethoven's Grosse Fugue Op.133 and Bartók is another obvious influence.

Ivan Zagni: String Quartet No.1 - "View From my Window"

In one movement

Ivan Zagni is an English-born (1942) composer/musician at present living and working in Auckland. His background includes much experience working as a guitarist in rock and popular music bands in London during the sixties and seventies. He moved to New Zealand in 1980. Composed in Wellington during 1992 while Ivan was Composer in Residence for Chamber Music New Zealand, "View from my Window" was written for and first performed by the New Zealand String Quartet.

Jack East: String Quartet "The Lullaby" (1985)

This piece begins with material transcribed from a Maori oriori and gradually transforms itself to another well known Maori melody of post-European origins. The traditional oriori is a song in hypnotic driving rhythm full of tribal legend composed for the child of a Maori chief. This work was commissioned with funding provided by the New Zealand Composers' Foundation and the Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa.

Jack East, born Paeroa 1944, presently teaches music at Westlake Girls High School in Auckland

Helen Bowater: "The Bohdi Tree" (1991)

In one movement.

Helen wrote this work for string quartet and Buddhist meditation gong in response to the sudden death at age forty of her beloved friend Robert Cook in July 1991. Rob followed Zen Buddhist spiritual practice with an increasing sense of urgency during the last fifteen years of his life.

The gong is used here to support Zen Buddhist meditation practice. The piece moves between simple, expressive melodic patterns reminiscent of chanting, dry percussive rattling sounds, and strong abrasive gestures which together express the sadness, emptiness and agitation accompanying unfathomable loss. At times these gestures accumulate relentlessly like the waves of a mind in shock before interruption by an explosive outburst of protest. The Bodhi Tree is reputedly the tree under which the Buddha was enlightened. A Bodhi tree brought from Japan is growing at the Buddhist monastery at Stokes Valley where Rob's funeral ceremony was held.

Helen Bowater is a Wellington-born composer (1952) now living in Auckland. Last year she was Composer in Residence for the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra and will have her major work of the residency "Chameleon" performed by the orchestra in June this year.

Nigel Keay: String Quartet No.2 (1995)

In three movements.

String Quartet No.2 was written between November 1994 and February 1995, the period during which I was rehearsing with the quartet all the works listed on this programme sheet, with the addition of Beethoven's Op.74 quartet "The Harp". This work was commissioned with funding provided by the New Zealand Composers' Foundation and the Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa. - Nigel Keay

The Mosaic String Quartet:

First Violin - Simon McLellan

Simon McLellan works as a freelance violinist in Auckland and is an Associate Violinist with the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra. In 1993 he became a casual member of both the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and the Wellington Regional Orchestra. He has also been a member of the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, National Youth Orchestra and Auckland Youth Symphony Orchestra.

Second Violin - Sarah Hart

Sarah Hart graduated with a Dip. Mus. in Violin Performance from Auckland University then continued her music studies at the National Music University in Vienna where she was strongly influenced in the Baroque practice and musical analysis by Eduard Melkus and also became a member of his Capella Academica. She was a member of the Austrian Radio and Television Orchestra for many years while also substituting at the National Viennese Operetta Company and the Viennese Chamber Opera.

From 1992-93 she was an assistant at the Elizabeth University of Music, Hiroshima, Japan where it was also possible to attend classes in musical analysis and contemporary music practice with Jo Kondo, a leading Japanese composer. In late 1994 she returned to Auckland.

Viola - Nigel Keay

Violist Nigel Keay has played in various quartets since 1977 and in 1993 established the Blue String Quartet, which recorded for a recent CANZ/ODE New Zealand Composer CD. He is an Associate Violist with the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra and this year is the Philharmonia's Composer-in-Residence. He has written several major works for orchestra as well as an opera (*At the Hawk's Well*), and has often been involved in the performance of his own chamber works which includes his first String Quartet and Piano Quartet. Nigel Keay plays on an instrument made by Adrian Studer in Nelson NZ.

Cello - Judith Williams

Cellist Judith Williams works as a freelance cellist and itinerant cello teacher in Auckland and is an experienced chamber musician. She is an Associate Cellist for the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra and has played with the Auckland Sinfonietta and was principal cellist for the Dunedin Sinfonia.

Thanks to Wah Lee's for the loan of the Gong. Thanks also to Tony Waring and the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra.